

# ANGLO-AMERICAN ARGUMENTATION

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# Source Material

- ***Getting Published in International Journals: Writing Strategies for European Social Scientists***

by Natalie Reid, (NOVA, 2010; Oslo)

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# Why Writing in English is Different

- Theory of contrastive rhetoric
- The “psychology of reading”
- Different expectations of readers and writers
- “Writing is thought made visible”

# What writing in English demands

- Every sentence must be clear on first reading, for only one meaning.
- An English paper is a self-contained universe. Everything that the reader needs to know must in the paper—and precisely where it belongs—so that the reader never, ever, gets confused.
- The writer must **frame** everything: not only the paper but also every section and paragraph.

## [continued]

- Nothing in English is implicit. You must spell everything out, and define all terms when you first mention them.
- An English paper creates an airtight empirical or theoretical proof. You do not narrate, discuss, or loosely theorize—instead, you tell the reader what you will or won't do, then do it, then show the reader that you have done it and *how* you have done it.

# Your obligation as a writer

- You must never take reader knowledge for granted. Assume nothing. Put everything where it belongs, as if nothing exists in the universe beyond your paper.

WHY?

# Because...

- Academic English is the world's only 100% **writer-responsible** language. In English, only the reader and the reader's needs matter. If the reader has to think about the writing, to figure out what it means or where the writer is going, then the writing, by definition, is not acceptable.

# The Five Essential Strategies for Maximizing Your Publication Chances

- Analyzing journals both for elimination and for submission
- Organizing and arguing in Aristotelian logic
- Editing for strength (less is more)
- Editing for clarity (clarity rules!)
- Revising rigorously for language, clarity, argumentation, punctuation, etc.



# Organizing and Arguing in Aristotelian logic

- Argumentation according to Aristotle
- Five-paragraph essay model
- John Swales' CARS model:
  - Establish the territory
  - Establish the niche
  - Occupy the niche (i.e., purpose statement)

# Paragraphing

All English paragraphs must have a topic sentence (a framing sentence). It tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about.

Ex: “What constitutes a paragraph—and what specific weight a paragraph carries—depends on the rhetorical tradition within a linguistic community.”

Ex: “Three factors are involved in studying X: 1, 2, and 3.”

Ex: “Caring for the very ill involves heavy physical and mental demands on professional caregivers.”

# Paragraphs, cont.

- US and UK paragraph styles often differ.
- The reader must be able to absorb the contents of a paragraph in one reading, without having to pause for a break mid-way. A very long paragraph is unreadable.
- Paragraphs must be tightly focused.

# Paragraphs, cont.

- Analyze your journal of choice for paragraph length.
- As a default position, keep all—or at least most—of your paragraphs no longer than 12-14 lines of type.
- Just as you should always vary the length of your sentences, vary the length of your paragraphs.

# Arguing according to Aristotle

“What you should do in your introduction is to state your subjects, in order that the point to be judged may be quite plain; in the epilogue you should summarize the argument by which your case has been proved.”

—Aristotle

# What Aristotle did

- Systematized the study of rhetoric
- Defined rhetoric as the “art of finding the best available means of persuasion in any situation”
- Conceived of persuasion as a strategy
- Laid out three distinct tactics for making an argument:

# Three strategic tactics for an Aristotelian argument

- Ethos (showing the speaker's trustworthiness)
- Pathos (appealing to the values most deeply held—and the emotions most deeply felt—by a particular audience)
- Logos (using logical, sound reasoning)

# What Aristotle also did

- Developed the concepts of inductive and deductive reasoning
- Discussed and emphasized the critical importance of clarity (no clarity, no logos!), including various kinds of sentence structure and language



# So we come, again, to

- “WRITING IS THOUGHT MADE VISIBLE”
- Translation: “If you can’t say what you mean, you don’t know what you mean; and if you can’t say it clearly, you obviously can’t think clearly.”

# The three major keys to English argumentation

- Analysis: breaking down things and ideas into clear, meaningful parts
- Synthesis: combining diverse elements into a coherent whole
- Framing

# What is an argument?

Your argument is to your paper as a story or a plot is to a novel: it is the skeleton that holds it together; it is the spine that allows it to stand upright; it is the only thing that matters. If anything—no matter how interesting—gets in the way of your argument, throw it out! But....

[continued]

.... But if what gets in the way of your argument is important or useful, then your argument is flawed. You then need to either reconstruct it or scrap it entirely and find a better one.

# Avoid these two constructions

- It is argued that....
- It is obvious that....

# Determinants

- Your argument *should determine* what goes where in a paper
- But the journal style *must determine* what goes where in your paper.
- Therefore, you must structure your argument according to the format of the journal you have chosen.

# What Goes Where in a Paper

- Introduction (depending on journal)
  - Necessary background / territory & niche
  - Purpose statement
  - Brief description of data set
  - Scope
  - (in certain fields) Results & conclusions

# Sample CARS model

- *Territory*: Most studies of \_\_\_\_\_ focus on the relationship between A and B.
- *Niche*: However, almost no studies investigate the relationship between B and B+1, a relationship critical to our understanding of the important processes of XYZ.



# CARS (continued)

- *Occupy niche with purpose statement:*  
Using data from Denmark, this paper analyzes the relationship of B to B+1. More specifically, it applies [Famous Scholar X's] theory of LMNOP to an examination of....

# Sample Purpose Statements

- This article discusses recent developments in [this] and analyzes their effectiveness in terms of the theory of [that].
- This study explores discourses about professional caregivers caring for [certain group of people] in [country] in [decade].
- This paper argues and presents evidence that [this] is a more effective strategy than [that] during peaceful regime changes.

# CARS analysis of abstract published in “Health” (Jan. 2012)

“Pharmaceutical products are commonly relied upon by professionals, and correspondingly patients, within a wide range of healthcare contexts. This dependence, combined with the inherent risk and uncertainty surrounding both medical practice and the drugs it harnesses, points towards the importance of trust in the pharmaceutical industry – a subject which has been much neglected by researchers. This article begins to address this deficiency by mapping out a conceptual framework which may form a useful basis for future research into this important topic....”

# Sample Introduction Analysis

Introduction: 6-9 paragraphs (but sometimes as few as 4),  
500-1200 words (mostly on longer side)

Often begins with a research question, contention, or empirical phenomenon (first sentence):

- How can A do B?
- The questions XYZ are a central topic in literature ABC.
- Relationship between A & B has gained increased attention in recent literature.
- A contention of theory XYZ is that factors A & B can best explain Result C.
- A is much more frequent than B.

# Sample Analysis, cont.

The rest of the paragraphs, except the last, follow the “territory-niche-occupy niche” structure:

- First 1-3 paragraphs usually cover literature strands (territory)
  - Old literature has highlighted the importance of A, B, & C.
  - New literature has explored D, E, & F.
- Next 1-3 paragraphs show what remain unclear theoretically/ methodologically or econometrically (establish niche)
  - Literature 1 + 2 draw critical attention to....
  - Relationship between A + B and A + C (or B + C) remains unclear. (theoretical argument)
  - Furthermore, methodological problems are not resolved.

# Sample Analysis, cont.

- Final 1-3 paragraphs (except last) explain how this paper solves the problem (occupies niche) and includes description of data, definitions, etc.
  - We emphasize A, B, C....
  - Building on these perspectives, I explore A + B + C.
    - I define term XYZ as....
    - I test data ABC with....
  - The current study responds to challenges with theoretical and empirical contributions. We argue that Theoretical Argument 1, Methodological Argument 2, Data 3....

# Sample Analysis, cont.

—The last paragraph names contributions of the paper (2 to 4-5 arguments):

- By examining XYZ..., I make several contributions: 1, 2, 3....
- Our findings indicate...Contribution 1, 2, 3....
- This article makes several contributions to the literature:  
First.... Second....

This paragraph often ends with very short overall conclusions/lessons learned:

- Overall RESULTS foster research discussion.
- RESULTS help to solve practical problems.

# Guidelines from “Childhood”

“The Introduction (no heading) should clearly state the purpose of the article, give only strictly pertinent references, and not review the subject extensively. Material, Methods and Results must be presented in logical sequence in the text, with text and illustrations emphasizing only important observations. The Discussion should emphasize new and important observations of the study and conclusions therefrom. Do not repeat in detail data from results. Include implications of the findings and their limitations, and relate observations to other relevant studies.”



# What Goes Where in a Paper

- Body (everything between the introduction and the conclusions)
  - necessary theory or background or literature review
  - methodology
  - data
  - results (plus robustness checks, etc.)

# What Goes Where in a Paper

- Conclusion
  - Nothing new goes in a conclusion! It must derive solely and logically from the information and organization contained in the Body.
  - If the journal has a Discussion section....

# What Goes Where in a Paper

- Discussion / Recommendations for Future Research, etc.
  - These sections must naturally come out of the Conclusions; that is, they must remain within the framework of all previous discussions (e.g., our study of X was limited to Country Z; future research should include other countries / additional environmental factors, such as....)

# The Abstract

- Should be presented first but written last
- Should never exceed journal's word limit.  
[Usually includes territory (if nec.), niche, purpose statement, results, conclusions, future research (if nec.)]
- Should omit details
- Must follow style of most common abstract pattern in journal

# Outlining Technique

1. Decide on your purpose. Write a one-sentence purpose statement.
2. Brainstorm: Tell the critical side of your brain to take a nap and write down every possible idea, theory, reference, method, etc., that could go in your paper. Let your mind range freely.

# Outlining [continued]

3. Become critical. Relate every item on your brainstorming list back to the purpose statement and eliminate all irrelevant ideas.

Look carefully at what remains on the list. If the list doesn't really cover what you know you have to write, then your purpose statement doesn't accurately reflect your purpose. If necessary, rewrite your purpose statement and repeat all the steps to this point.

By the time you finish this step, you should be satisfied with both your purpose statement and your list.

# Outlining [continued]

4. Group together all related items.  
(Each group will become a paragraph or a series of paragraphs.)

# Outlining [continued]

5. Put the items in each group in a logical order.

Add any items that you suddenly realize you have left out.

Eliminate any items that turn out to be redundant or irrelevant.



# Outlining [continued]

6. Place all the groups in a logical sequence. (That sequence will usually be directly related to the organization of sections in your journal of choice.)

# Abstract Analysis

Why? Editor's/reviewers' first impression!

- It contains the essence of the entire paper.
- Both online and in some fields, only few people read the entire paper.
- “A concise abstract should briefly state the purpose of the research and the main results.” [Journal of Health Economics, submission guidelines]

# Journal of Biomedical Science

## Abstract:

“The Abstract of the manuscript should not exceed 350 words and must be structured into separate sections: **Background**, the context and purpose of the study; **Results**, the main findings; and **Conclusions**, brief summary and potential implications. Please minimize the use of abbreviations and do not cite references....”

# Analyzing Abstracts from Your Journal of Choice

- First, consider sentence information:  
What does each sentence tell you in terms of the purpose, theory, method, data, findings, or conclusions of the paper?
- Second, consider sentence purpose:  
What is each sentence doing in its particular position in the abstract, what purpose does it serve, and how does it do so?

# Sample Abstract Analysis

Almost always 4 sentences (sometimes 3), about 100 words

—First sentence: (Data + question) typically is:

- Using...DATA, we found...RESULTS.
- With...DATA, we examine...QUESTION.
- Based on...DATA, we examine how A and B are related.

—Second & third sentences (Results 1 & 2) typically are:

- We discover...RESULT 1 (most important). We also found...RESULT 2 (corollary or secondary result).
- Findings of this study demonstrate RESULT 1 (negative relationship between X & Y). Variable Z...RESULT 2 (Var. Z moderated this effect).

# Sample Analysis, cont.

- We found that...RESULT 1 (Var. X is positively related to Var. Y). Both Var. X and Var. Y moderate Var. Z.

—Fourth sentence (conclusion/consequence/lesson learned/additional result) typically is:

- These findings illustrate the benefits of applying Method A.
- Variable ZZ did not make a difference.
- We develop a theoretical framework and empirical approach for understanding how X and Y are related.
- We present a model based on two data sets that demonstrate how X reduces Y.

# Sample Abstract Analysis

“Ethics, Problem Framing, and Training in Qualitative Inquiry” by Jan Nespore and Susan L. Groenke (*Qualitative Inquiry*, 2009):

This article examines the ethical issues bound up in the ways research problems are initially framed: the questions asked, the temporal and spatial frames of the study, the ways participants are defined. It explores the consequences of thinking through ethical issues using recent reconceptualizations of *agency* and suggests extensions of the ways researchers define *participants* for ethical purposes. The article concludes by examining some of the reasons for the relative neglect of such issues in graduate research preparation.

# Nespor & Groenke, cont.

Using **Purpose Phrases** Method:

- Purpose (This article examines **A** issues in framing three **B** problems: 1, 2, 3.)
- Refining of purpose/methodology (It explores the consequences of thinking through **A** issues using **C** methodology.)
- Conclusions (“The article concludes....”)



# Sample “Purpose Phrase” Abstract

- Abstract for presenting a new model (3-4 sentences)
  - Purpose (We present a model of....)
  - Explanation of model (Model exhibits # of features that....)
  - Conclusion (Model sheds light on **A**, as well as on **B**.)

# Another “Purpose Phrase” Abstract

- Classic abstract for just about any paper, depending on journal [5 sentences]
  - Background (“Until the early 1990s....”)
  - Territory (“At that time, **X** was happening”)
  - Niche (“As conventional explanations of **X** have failed,” the authors use **Y** approach)
  - Occupying niche (**Y** “clearly explains” what happened in these instances of **X**)
  - Results/conclusions (“This analysis suggests....”)

# Difference between Results and Conclusions

Results: Your specific findings

Conclusions: Your interpretation or analysis of what you found; your insights and well-considered opinions.

Ex: “Most Americans take it for granted that they will receive all the electricity they need for their homes and offices.”

Result or Conclusion?

# Preliminary Argumentation Editing Checklist

- Does my argument proceed logically? Is it airtight?
- Have I named and countered all possible objections?
- Have I considered and minimized all possible disadvantages?
- Have I anticipated and answered all my reader's likely questions?

# Preliminary Checklist, cont.

- Have I defined all my terms—and in the right place (i.e., at first mention)?
- Have I used any language with which my reader may not be familiar?
- Have I proofread every word and punctuation mark?
- Am I consistent in vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and grammar for UK or U.S. (or other) English?

# Most Important

- Does everything (e.g., # of tables, length of sections) match the style of the journal?
- Have I followed the journal's style/author guidelines (e.g., APA Style Manual, Chicago Style Manual) to the letter?
- Has a properly skilled native speaker of English read and edited the final draft? [Not every native English-speaking scholar is a good academic stylist, nor is a neighbor's American or British spouse with no training in editing or academic writing a wise choice.]

# Resubmission Letters

- Never assume that the editor remembers the content of your paper or anything that he or she wrote to you.
- Never make the editor have to go back and forth between two documents.
- Therefore, always cut-and-paste the reviewers' comments, with your revisions and comments following in a different font or format.

# Resubmission letters, cont.

Use language such as

- I applied this helpful suggestion to....
- As referee 2 has suggested, I have changed....
- This revision makes much more clear how we draw our conclusions.
- Thanks to this comment, the revised article now more clearly focuses on....
- Following reviewer 1's suggestion, we have considerably reduced the extended example. We now link the case directly to both the theoretical framework and the practical consequences of X for [specific group].



# To Recap: Some Overall Guidelines

- Be as concise as possible without sacrificing meaning.
- Keep your sentences and paragraphs reasonably short.
- Define all your terms the first time you mention them.
- Always be clear—never allow your reader to become confused (not even for one sentence).
- Write in the active voice whenever possible.
- Frame (contextualize) everything. Frame your paper as important to the field. Always let the reader know what you are doing—and why.
- Create as airtight a proof as possible.
- Always write for a specific journal.
- Revise and revise. Then have a skilled native speaker of English read and comment on the final draft.